

THE SECRETARY'S VISION

Safer, Simpler, Smarter Transportation Solutions

Leadership, effective management and commitment to the highest standards of public service characterized Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta's response to the tragic events of 9/11 and to the aftershocks of those events. Secretary Mineta tapped into the professionalism and ingenuity of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Team to succeed in addressing these unprecedented challenges.

Now Secretary Mineta is calling upon the DOT Team to be architects of the future and redefine our core mission in light of future challenges to transportation. DOT's core mission emphasizes the national interest in safe and efficient transportation. The Department of Transportation Act of 1966 calls for "...*the development of transportation policies and programs that contribute to providing fast, safe, efficient, and convenient transportation at the lowest cost....*"

This core mission is valid today and will be valid well into the future even with a global economy where anything can be made anywhere and sold everywhere else around the world. Today, multinational manufacturers source inputs from international suppliers, bring these inputs to production facilities, assemble them and ship them to customers around the globe. Competitive international trade depends on transportation.

Transportation is an integrated network consisting of publicly and privately owned and operated equipment, infrastructure and logistics systems. Increasingly the equipment – cars, trucks, trains, ships, airplanes, launch vehicles and pipelines - uses information technology to ensure that the person or good being moved arrives at the right place at the right time. Similarly the infrastructure - highways, port facilities, airports, space launch and reentry sites, railway and transit stations – is connected by communication and information networks. Improvements in logistics systems that are sparked by information technology - such as navigation equipment, air traffic control systems, and tracking systems - increase not only the efficiency but also the safety of transportation. The Nation's economic growth and prosperity are dependent upon the synergies of our transportation and information networks.

Developing a strategic Vision for the Department of Transportation is essential if we are to achieve our core mission in light of the challenges inherent in a global context where expectations for the movement of people and goods are propelled by information technology. Americans will require even safer and more efficient domestic and international transportation to support their daily lives, to underpin the economy and to connect the United States to rest of the world.

Secretary Mineta has called for a safer, simpler and smarter transportation system for the benefit of all Americans. *Safer* because we will place greater emphasis on saving lives and reducing accidents than ever before. *Simpler* because we will improve the

management of our resources by consolidating and streamlining programs. And *Smarter* because we will focus on improving efficiency, achieving results and increasing accountability. We will be pioneers in transportation pursuing best practices and breaking the mold to achieve results that benefit the taxpayers.

Over the past year, we have been using these principles as our guide in developing ideas for the reauthorization of Federal surface and air transportation programs to ensure that they will successfully address our Nation's future needs. In addition to these two major pieces of legislation, this Administration is working to achieve significant reform in intercity passenger rail and to address maritime transportation issues with greater focus and substance.

This unique confluence of events gives the Bush Administration the opportunity, for the first time in history, to work with Congress in bringing about important changes in all modes of transportation — at the same time — thus delivering on the promise of safer, more efficient transportation at home and abroad.

Safety

Secretary Mineta's top priority is improving the safety of the Nation's transportation system. President Bush has challenged this Department to develop creative ways to reduce the number of fatalities on the Nation's highways. Secretary Mineta has accepted this challenge and, as a safety advocate, has established a goal to reduce the highway fatality rate to not more than 1.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by 2008 from 1.7 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 1996.

The need to improve safety on our highways is clear. In 2002, over 42 thousand people were killed in traffic accidents. While alcohol remains the single largest contributing factor to fatal crashes, claiming, over 17,000 lives, about 25 percent of Americans (or about 70 million people) still do not use safety belts when driving or riding in motor vehicles. Finally, 12 percent of people killed in motor vehicle incidents are involved in crashes with large trucks. Secretary Mineta's central strategies for reducing transportation fatalities and injuries on our highways are to reduce alcohol-impaired driving, increase safety belt use and ensure that commercial vehicles are meeting the highest possible safety standards.

Secretary Mineta's Vision for aviation safety has several key elements and it extends to aviation here in the U.S. and internationally. Aviation safety begins with a proactive approach by using hard data to detect problems and disturbing trends; taking the actions that will achieve the greatest benefits in preventing accidents; using technology where it brings the greatest safety benefits and constantly questioning the status quo. Secretary Mineta's goal is to reduce the commercial aviation accident rate by 80 percent by 2007 and the Department is on track to achieve that goal. The DOT Team is committed to *Safer Skies* at home and abroad.

Mobility

Congestion is clearly a growing threat to our economic well being. Indeed, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has said it is one of the biggest problems facing our economy today. Transportation congestion and bottlenecks damage air quality, slow commerce, increase energy consumption and threaten our quality of life causing Americans to waste significant time and money. Traffic congestion now costs motorists in our Nation's top urban areas about \$68 billion a year in wasted time and fuel. These costs do not include the added expense incurred by businesses and their customers when goods and materials are not delivered in a timely fashion. Without public transit, the congestion cost would be \$19 billion higher.¹

In 2000, aviation delays attributable to air traffic congestion cost passengers, shippers, and the industry an estimated record \$6.5 billion, not including costs to other sectors of the economy. The tragic events of 9/11 coupled with the economic downturn have depressed air traffic levels. The most optimistic predictions are for air travel and activity at air traffic facilities to return to pre 9/11 levels between 2005 and 2006. However, the mix of air traffic is expected to be more complex. There will be more small regional and business jets that use the same airspace and runways but require greater separation from the larger jets. This increased growth and complexity will require more capacity in the air traffic control system and at certain airports.

Clearly, the time has come for more effective solutions. Secretary Mineta has called for these solutions to be part of a comprehensive approach to congestion relief that involves creativity and leadership in making needed improvements to every mode of transportation.

Strategic expansion of our system capacity and other solutions are needed to address our growing mobility needs. We will accelerate the application of technology to improve operations for the most efficient use of existing facilities, maintain the infrastructure through better asset management, and inform travelers of dangerous conditions and alternative routes. We will further empower Tribal, state and local decision-making because local transportation problems are best solved locally. We will work to develop a reliable and financially viable intercity passenger rail network, which is an essential element of the Nation's transportation system. Finally, we will explore ways to develop a robust, domestic short sea and waterway shipping system to alleviate congestion. Nationwide, growth in port container traffic is expected to double by 2020. Our Nation's coastal and waterway shipping system is underutilized and it could provide a practical, safe and efficient means of transporting freight.

Congestion cannot be relieved, however, without significant investment in the transportation infrastructure. As we have seen in Europe and elsewhere around the world, the private sector can play a huge role in infrastructure investments. For the most part, that has not been true in the United States. The Bush Administration hopes to change that. We will seek ways to expand and improve current Federal innovative finance programs. Figuring out how to finance new transportation infrastructure will

¹ Source: FTA

take time and creative thinking on the part of many public and private sector players. The revenue streams that are the foundation of any innovative financing strategy are there: individuals and businesses will pay for improved efficiency in every sector of the economy, and transportation is no different.

An integral aspect of mobility is accessibility. To be inclusive, transportation must be accessible to all people, including low income, elderly and persons with disabilities. Transportation connects each of us to vitally important aspects of our lives: work, education, family, friends, recreation, health, and commerce. Many of the 37 million Americans who live below the poverty line rely on transit as their only means of transportation. As former recipients of Federal aid move from welfare to work, transit will offer the critical link that makes employment possible and the American workforce stronger. Accessible public transportation is critical to nearly 50 million Americans with disabilities and the increasing elderly population who can no longer drive. It is our obligation to ensure that transportation is not only safe and efficient, but is also accessible to all. Where barriers to accessibility exist, we will seek to eliminate them. When planning for the future, accessibility will be part of our Vision. We will strive to give more freedom and choice to travelers and shippers. Mobility is the right of every American.

Global Connectivity

Secretary Mineta's Vision of the future acknowledges the vital importance of global connectivity in transportation. Transportation systems within and among Nations are lifelines to the future, to freer trade and accelerated economic growth, to greater cultural exchange and to the expansion of democracy around the world. Our increasingly globalized economy hinges on efficient supply chains and just-in-time manufacturing. Transportation is critical to both. With leaner inventories, companies must rely on transportation that enables them to conduct business in the most cost-effective, competitive way.

International trade and travel have become an increasingly important part of the transportation picture. In 2001, over 1.6 billion tons of international freight, valued at \$1.9 trillion, moved to and from the U.S. accounting for over 10 percent of the nearly 16 billion tons of freight that moved on the Nation's transportation system. That same year, over 19 million containers were used to transport imports into the U.S., six million by ocean vessels and 13 million by truck and rail from Canada and Mexico, illustrating the importance of efficient freight flows. Competitive international trade depends on transportation.

On the leading edge of international cooperation is commercial aviation which has grown 70-fold since the first jet airliner flew five decades ago, growth unmatched by any other mode of transportation over that period. Recent statistics show that over 1.6 billion passengers travel by air for business and recreation each year. This figure is expected to grow to 2.3 billion passengers annually by the end of the decade.

Increasing globalization of the American economy will also put pressure on the capacity of our ports and borders. By the year 2020, U.S. foreign trade in goods is expected to grow by more than half its current tonnage. Major congestion that now occurs in and around marine ports and terminals at specific points and times will increase. DOT must have new policies and programs in place to be prepared for this projected increase in trade.

We will employ four key strategies to address global connectivity in transport. We will continue to liberalize aviation markets around the world; expand the capacity and efficiency of our freight transportation system; improve intermodal linkages; and ensure efficient trade movements at border crossings. In the future, America will need a fully integrated domestic transportation system as well as safe and efficient connections to the rest of the world.

Environmental Stewardship

Current trends in transportation are exerting pressure on environmental resources worldwide. In the U.S., commercial and personal travel has grown substantially in recent years and will continue to increase in the future. For example, annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on our Nation's highways have almost quadrupled since 1960 and have far outstripped the growth in lane-miles. Increased travel boosts transportation's energy consumption, creating challenges in terms of supply. Energy consumption is also tied to greenhouse gas production, an emerging concern for the transportation sector, which produces 26.8 percent of the greenhouse gases emitted in the U.S. and is increasing emissions faster than any other sector. Although transportation emissions of nearly all air pollutants are at their lowest levels in 30 years, and the use of public transportation contributes to the reduction in air emissions from cars and trucks, continued growth in travel has caused a slight increase in nitrogen oxide emissions and continues to challenge efforts to reduce air pollutant emissions.

Americans want solutions to our transportation problems but they want solutions that are consistent with sound environmental planning. Environmental streamlining and stewardship offer a new way of doing business that brings together the timely delivery of transportation projects with the protection of the environment. It is a rejection of the false choice often presented between adding transportation capacity and protecting our environment. Context-sensitive solutions are an effort to get all of the players to work together to ensure that transportation decisions are fully respectful of communities and of environmental resources.

In the coming years, DOT will balance the need for a safe and efficient transportation network with the importance of preserving environmental quality but in a more efficient manner. Secretary Mineta's central strategy for achieving balance will be to consolidate and streamline our programs and improve system performance. We will accelerate the review of all vital transportation projects, consistent with the requirements of environmental law and our responsibilities to be good stewards of the environment. The time required to complete environmentally sound projects will be reduced, consistent with our goal of *Smarter* transportation solutions.

We will implement Executive Order 13274, “Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews,” signed by President Bush to speed up decision making on vital airport, highway, transit and intermodal transportation projects, while safeguarding the environment. As specified in the Executive Order, we have created an executive-level Federal task force, chaired by Secretary Mineta, which will expedite priority projects and improve procedures that apply to all projects. Executive Order 13274 means environmentally sound projects will no longer be delayed unnecessarily by inefficient review procedures. We will respect environmental requirements, but we will address those requirements more efficiently.

In addition to implementing the President’s Executive Order, we are pursuing a wide range of other initiatives designed to lessen transportation’s impact on the environment. For example, we are looking carefully at how we can reform the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards to encourage vehicle manufacturers to improve the fuel efficiency of their products.

Security

President Bush has directed DOT and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to work together to design a world-class transportation security system that will prevent terrorists from ever again using transportation as a weapon against us. As defenders of the homeland, we understand the urgency in securing our transportation facilities from terrorist attack as well as from foreign and domestic criminal enterprise. We also recognize that our transportation system must remain a vital link for mobilizing our armed forces for military contingencies and for supporting civilian emergency response.

Secretary Mineta has called upon the DOT Team to remember that the first task of our Department is to keep our national transportation system operating during an emergency situation and to keep Americans who use it as safe and secure as possible. We will work closely with DHS, and with our State, local government and private sector partners to elevate security levels not only for aviation, but also for our railways, highways, waterways, transit systems, and pipelines. The Department’s Maritime Administration is responsible for maintaining the Nation’s Ready Reserve Fleet of vessels that can be called into action in time of war. We will ensure that the Nation’s military needs in the maritime sector are fully met during times of crisis. We will exploit the opportunities presented by our regulatory enforcement activities when they expose security risks in the transport of goods or people. We are dedicated to accomplishing our crucial transportation missions and will work to keep transportation operating safely and efficiently even during emergency situations.

Organizational Excellence and the President’s Management Agenda

As the Chief Executive Officer of the best managed Department in the Federal government, Secretary Mineta understands that we cannot achieve our strategic objectives without a culture of continuous improvement. The DOT Team supports the President’s Management Agenda (PMA) and is implementing it fully throughout the Department. Three principles guided the President’s Vision for government reform:

government should be citizen centered, results oriented and market based, promoting innovation through competition. The PMA contains five mutually reinforcing goals that the DOT Team is integrating into its corporate culture in striving for continuous management improvement:

- Strategic Management of Human Capital;
- Budget and Performance Integration;
- Competitive Sourcing;
- Expanded E-Government; and
- Improved Financial Management.

To make DOT the most desirable place to work in the Federal government and the internationally recognized focal point for transportation core competencies, we must face a number of challenges in the years ahead. Most critically, we must attract the best and the brightest people to our workforce and inspire a new generation of innovators and pioneers in transportation careers. Secretary Mineta's Vision calls for DOT to become the employer of choice not only within the transportation enterprise but also within the Federal government.

Conclusion

Americans have built a vast and highly productive network of transportation assets based on the strengths of individual modes – air, marine, highway, transit and rail. Now, our challenge is to become architects of the future blending these separate constituencies into a single, fully coordinated system – one that connects and integrates the individual modes in a manner that is at once safe, economically efficient, equitable, and environmentally sound. The American people require the safest and the most efficient transportation system we can provide. The quality of our lives, the shape of our communities, and the productivity of our economy depend on our success in meeting this goal.